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SUBJECT: TOGO: COOPERATION MINISTER BAWARA'S VISIT TO PARIS

REF: LOME 16

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Andrew Young, 1.4 (b/d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Togo Cooperation Minister Bawara focused on restarting bilateral and multilateral development assistance programs for Togo during his January 16-18 visit to France. According to MFA Desk Officer Daniel Westerink, Togo has developed a possible roadmap that could result in the resumption of French and EU assistance as well as support from the African Development Bank (AfDB), World Bank, and IMF, within the next six or eight months. The French reinforced the need for Togo to continue democratic reform and not to rest on the success of the October legislative elections. Westerink said that the GOF remained cautiously optimistic about the Faure government and Faure himself, was interested in security sector reform, supported Togo's offer of 800 troops for UNAMID, and remained skeptical about opposition leader Gilchrist Olympio and the opposition's strategies for countering Faure. END SUMMARY.

Making Peace with the IFIs

12. (C) MFA Togo Desk Officer Daniel Westerink on January 22 discussed Togo in the context of Cooperation Minister Gilbert Bawara's visit to Paris during the January 16-18 period. Westerink said that France wanted to provide Togo with encouragement after the successful October elections and indications that Faure would continue a program of democratic reform. Thus Bawara's visit was centered on economic assistance, with France willing to help bilaterally and to support Togo's efforts to resume programs with the EU, AfDB, WB, and IMF. Westerink said that the EU was ready to resume assistance but that the EU wanted clarification regarding the settlement of Togo's arrearages with the AfDB and WB. Westerink described a possible arrangement where Togo would pay back 1% of its USD 18 million in arrearages to the AfDB, with the AfDB absorbing half of the remaining 99% and eventual donors covering the remaining half. Togo's arrearages to the WB amounted to about USD 150 million, Westerink said, and he mentioned the possibility of a short-term loan arrangement to cover them.

13. (C) Clearing the arrearages would then facilitate the resumption of EU and WB engagement with Togo and the prospect of renewed engagement with the IMF. Westerink said that if Togo could make progress on these issues and arrive at a formally accepted plan, it might be possible to organize a donors' conference in Brussels at some point during the next six or eight months. He acknowledged that Togo could well have problems overcoming these obstacles quickly but that the Togolese seemed bent on doing so. Westerink said that bilaterally, France might be able to conclude a Partnership

Framework Agreement by this summer. (NOTE: The Partnership Framework Agreement is the vehicle the French have used for the past several years to formalize assistance programs with recipient countries. The PFA runs for five years and is intended to be modifiable during its course, so that initial funding commitments can be adjusted to meet changing circumstances. END NOTE.)

Reform in Togo Must Continue

¶4. (C) Bawara met with State Secretary Jean-Marie Bockel (Cooperation and Francophonie), a team of economic experts from various ministries, Presidential Deputy Diplomatic (and principal Africa) Advisor Bruno Joubert, and MFA AF A/S Jean de Gliniasty during his visit. Westerink said that the French, while expressing support for Togo's economic goals, reiterated the need for Togo to continue to make progress politically, in such areas as human rights, good governance, and the rule of law. They also stressed that Togo should not continue to believe that the good will generated by the successful October legislative elections would last forever -- the Togolese had to keep making progress if they expected the international community to view Togo favorably.

Faure's Leadership

¶5. (C) Westerink said that Faure had made a positive impression in several areas since coming to power and did not appear intent on ruling with an iron fist as had his father. Reducing his brother Kpatcha's power was a sign that Faure was seeking a moderate course. However, he risked angering the hard-liners (which included Kpatcha) and provoking their reaction. Westerink said that Faure would face more

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difficulties if economic and political reform began to threaten certain state-owned economic entities, which were the source of much wealth for Togo's elite. Given these potential difficulties, and given continuing uncertainties about Faure's ultimate goals, Westerink cautioned that Faure's apparent commitment to reform might not necessarily hold. Still, Westerink said that the GOF remained cautiously optimistic about Faure's leadership, which was already an improvement over his father's.

Security Sector Reform

¶6. (C) Westerink said that France was interested in promoting security sector reform in Togo, believing that the military was too big for Togo's defense needs and that the police and gendarmerie were too small and not well trained. Westerink said that the Togolese army should not also double as its internal security force. France therefore intended to offer training in modern police techniques to Togolese police and gendarmes, which would include the need to respect the legal rights of citizens, a basic understanding of the judiciary's role in law enforcement, and exposure to methods other than brute force when having to maintain public order.

Troops for Darfur

¶7. (C) Westerink noted Togo's recent offer to send about 800 troops to Darfur to serve in UNAMID. He said that France supported this contribution, which UN DPKO had not yet fully cleared. Westerink said that Faure made this offer for two reasons: 1) to bolster Togo's international image and 2) to reduce the military's visibility in Togo by giving them something to do elsewhere. Troops assigned to UNAMID were likely to return to Togo better trained and more experienced, a further benefit. Westerink said, however, that deploying the troops to Darfur would likely take place toward the end of 2008 or beginning of 2009, in part a function of how rapidly UNAMID comes together.

Togolese Politics

18. (C) Westerink said that Bawara "said the right things" about democratization but surprised them with his focus on the 2010 presidential elections in Togo. Westerink noted that the French Embassy in Lome was not sure where Bawara stood in Togo's political spectrum, but Westerink commented that he had had little good to say about the UFC opposition party. Westerink said that the GOF had no contact with UFC leader Gilchrist Olympio, even though he lived much of the time in Paris. In the GOF's view, the opposition had been thoroughly out-manuevered by the Faure government over the question of legislative electoral districts, which allowed Faure's party to win a disproportionate number of seats despite a much closer popular vote. This had all been done transparently, demonstrating that the opposition had underestimated Faure and the number of Togolese who supported him. Westerink added that Olympio was doing the opposition few favors by refusing any role in the government and remaining aloof. Westerink observed that Olympio, understandably, was rooted in the past and in his family's conflicts with Eyadema. Olympio did not seem to understand that Faure, who was canny enough to tone down the annual January 13 celebration of his father's rise to power (reftel). was not his father and that revised strategies were perhaps necessary if the opposition wanted to challenge him.

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